

NSC BRIEFING

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21 January 1959

BACKGROUND PIECE ON GREECE
(For use in discussion of OCB Paper)

- I. The OCB Report dated 17 December 1958 remains a generally accurate description of the current situation in Greece, the only noteworthy shift being the improvement, for the time being at least, in the climate of Greek-Turkish relations.
- II. The Cyprus issue remains of paramount importance to Greek Government and people.
 - A. General reappraisal of Greek foreign policy following inconclusive UN debate on Cyprus in December has led to:
 1. Apparently sincere attempts by Greece and Turkey to resolve their differences (with improved attitudes evident also in press of both countries), and a more favorable Greek attitude on ties with US and NATO.
 - B. If current Greek-Turkish negotiations fail, however, new violence on Cyprus is likely, with renewed strains on Greek ties with West, and increasing political instability in Greece.
 1. Greeks apparently intend blame British if talks with Turks fail.
- III. Karamanlis government continues in control, but trend toward political polarization continues and offers long-range threat.
 - A. New cabinet appointments this month by Karamanlis have drawn bitter reaction from two leaders of government party, but no defections.

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01987
DOCUMENT ID: 100010037-4
CLASS. OFFICE: 15 3 6
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 12-2-71
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 12-2-71
REVIEWER: 372044

- B. Opposition Liberal Party continues faction-ridden, and little hope is seen as yet for the movement toward unification of all or most non-Communist opposition parties.
- C. Thus effective opposition to government largely in hands of Communist-front United Democratic Left (EDA), which won impressive 24% of popular vote in May 1958 general elections.
- D. Government appears recognize dangers from EDA, and is continuing efforts reduce or negate this threat.
 - 1. Harassing tactics, such as arrest of leftist leaders and campaign to identify EDA with illegal Greek Communist Party, continue.
 - 2. Government has also taken initiative in economic field with announcement this month of new Five-Year Plan to raise living standards.

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